



SAVE OUR SHORES

January 23, 2005

Bruce Fujimoto
Division of Water Quality
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 1977
Sacramento, CA 958112-1977

Donnette Dunaway
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo CA 940401

Subject: Monterey Regional Storm Water Management Plan

Dear Mr. Fujimoto and Ms. Dunaway:

This letter serves to provide our organization's comments and recommendations regarding the subject permit application. Save Our Shores is a non-profit organization founded 26 years ago in the Monterey Bay area. Our organization has worked for nearly three decades, engaging thousands of individuals to protect and conserve the ecosystems of the Central California Coast. Save Our Shores was instrumental in banning offshore oil drilling and in establishing the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

We believe that the subject application before you is deeply flawed and is, moreover, the most important item you will face for many years to come. That is why we urge you to refrain from approving the permit, and to send it back to the applicants to be re-written in such a manner that it provides measures with the efficacy to protect against storm water pollution in this area.

It is also important to recognize, when weighing the application, that preservation of marine resources is deeply rooted in the history of this region. For example, it was the Carmel poet Robinson Jeffers, who, in the 1940s, composed the poem containing the notation "Not Man Apart", which in 1965 became the title and verse used in the Sierra Club's national best selling photo essay (book) on the Big Sur coast. This book crystallized the movement to protect California's coastline.

That is why we at Save Our Shore are concerned that the very applicants or cities upon which this rich heritage rests would propose such an empty program to protect this national treasure we call the Monterey coastline. When one considers that these same entities promote the pristine

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marine environment and its many ecosystems to attract tourists to the area – and reap millions annually in tourist dollars -- it becomes even more difficult to understand why these same entities would propose a plan that ultimately will denude the natural resources that they so aggressively promote.

Both the Ocean Conservancy and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) have provided well-documented information on the deficiencies of the Monterey Peninsula cities plan. Save Our Shores shares this criticism. We ask that you pay particular attention to prohibiting continued discharges to Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS).

Although the program before you is plain and simple “a program to create a program” as the NRDC noted, we do have several specific comments that we wish to make. It should be apparent to the reader that the applicants have simply linked themselves with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) to “get through the application process”, and failed to understand or include the opportunities available by partnering with the many neighborhood improvement groups in each of the cities and the many non-profits in the area. Our comments are presented as follows:

- BMP1-6 Table The tables accompanying the text of the application assign the MS4 “implementers” with specific tasks. There is, however, no self-reporting mechanism. No checklist or certification by the MS4s that the initiatives are being implemented. How does the applicant or the Regional Board propose to ascertain if the elements of the permit are actually undertaken?
- BMP –6- Good Housekeeping The Monterey Peninsula comprises as many acres in turf grass (golf courses) as it does in strawberries, a recent so-called “Big Ag” issue before the Board, yet the application makes no mention of turf grass operators or the nutrient loadings, pesticides and herbicides associated with runoff from such sites.
- BMP 1-1a The applicant states that a comprehensive education and outreach plan will be developed and implemented in one year, targeting all ages and groups in the region. This simply is not possible. The implementers are the Program Manager in partnership with the MBNMS. These entities simply do not have the resources to accomplish such a sweeping goal. Moreover, the Program Manager has contracted with a single consultant (one person) to implement the plan. What is lacking is recognition (and enlistment) of the ongoing education and outreach work of the many non-profits and neighborhood groups already working on these same education issues in the region.
- BMP-2.2a-c The applicant proposes financial support and assistance to the annual Coastal Cleanup Day, the largest sponsored event in California. In addition to financial support from the California Coastal Commission, the event receives more corporate financial assistance than any conservation effort in the region. Additional funds are not needed. What is needed is financial support for neighborhood education programs, oil-recycling campaigns, local tide pool protection groups, among many other organizations and programs.
- BMP 5-1a-51f This is simply a “re-hashing of programs already in place through the Regional Boards. The “Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook” and the annual

workshops provided by the Regional Board address these issues. Each city or special district by default becomes the “permit holder” for SWPPPs and post- SWPPP storm water management plans.

- Chart Showing Budget Breakdown An example of the lack of planning or understanding of the tasks associated with the minimum measures is the budget earmarked for “Restaurant BMP Training”. This sector of the economy has the largest turnover in the area and the widest range of non-English speakers. Onsite education and training must meet the needs of these new employees. In addition, there is nothing in the educational chart that addresses the remaining good housekeeping measures, such as automotive maintenance or “landscaping.”

It is clear that, as other commenters have pointed out, the minimum measures were simply borrowed from existing EPA descriptions and have no particular bearing on the special circumstances of the Monterey Peninsula. The same holds true for the public education program, which simply borrowed from the MBNMS’ ongoing education programs, when the array of under-served groups is so obvious – such as education programs targeting corporate giants like the professional race car circuit at Laguna Seca, which fills more hotel rooms annually than any other tourist activity in the region.

What really is disappointing is that the Monterey Regional Storm Water Management Plan presented an opportunity to bring innovation to the field of storm water management. It could have built upon the successes of other communities. It could have included the numerous local specialists, scientists and different communities in the region together to produce a plan that would protect aquatic resources. It does nothing of this sort. The application package before the Board is simply a “cut and paste” exercise, and does not deserve the Board’s approval.

Please call me if I may answer any comments or questions. I can be reached directly at (831) 462-5660. Ext. 17.

Sincerely,

Original Signed

Stephen Laughlin
Clean Water Program Director

Cc: Jane De Lay, Executive Director, Save Our Shores
Save Our Shores Board of Directors